CREATING SHORT RHYMES TO IMPROVE THE SPEAKING SKILL OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN COLOMBIA

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Abstract

Songs have always been considered valuable tools in the learning and teaching of a foreign language. Music helps build up an engaging and successful learning environment that facilitates and motivates second language acquisition. Through music, learners practice vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, and pronunciation, which are essential to promote oral communication skills. Moreover, songs boost learners' confidence and improve learners' cognitive and social skills. This paper aims to create ten musical rhymes that help stimulate the speaking skills of the secondary school students in Bogotá, Colombia. The musical rhymes address the most common language functions students use in everyday conversations such as personal information, daily routines, jobs and professions, free time activities, likes and dislikes, be going to, present perfect, present perfect continuous, and second conditionals. The chanted verses were uploaded on a *Youtube* channel so teachers worldwide can benefit from this learning aid. Also, the songs have visual support to provide comprehensibility of the vocabulary. Moreover, I gave some tips and recommendations so the content of the song can be used appropriately to stimulate oral communication in the classroom.

Dedication

First and foremost, I dedicate this thesis project to my deceased mother, who raised me with great values and exhorted me to excellence. She was, is, and will always be a driving force in my life. I also dedicate this thesis to my beautiful son, who is my inspiration and motivation.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to Thank God, the almighty, for the many blessings in my life. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Michelle Plaisance for guiding and supporting me throughout my graduation studies. And finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Paula Wilder, my thesis advisor, whose patience, extensive knowledge, unwavering support, and constructive advice helped me in the completion of this thesis project.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Songs and rhymes have always been considered valuable tools in the learning and teaching of a foreign language. We educators cannot deny the benefits this powerful teaching approach brings into the classroom. Kenney (2005) argued that music positively affects the classroom atmosphere and helps foster language production and retention. We were exposed to many musical rhymes in early childhood education since they are considered fundamental in literacy development (Kenney, 2005). Memorizing and reciting, for instance, "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" or "The Wheels on the Bus Nursery Rhyme" has been a meaningful and profound language experience for many children around the world. These songs, not only enhanced children's reading and speaking skills, but they also expanded their vocabulary and provided knowledge about the world in a pleasing way (Kenney, 2005).

Music, pedagogically speaking, works as an emotional outlet, makes education more enjoyable, improves students' self-esteem, helps develop social skills, is a stress reliever, and is a key to creativity. Moreover, it promotes and motivates second language acquisition since its ludic aspect in the learning and teaching a language helps build a more supportive and agreeable classroom atmosphere, thus lowering learners' affective filters. Krashen (1982 as cited in Parrish, 2004) claimed that the role of a teacher is to reduce learners' level of anxiety by providing a successful learning environment, which allows them to interact and participate in classroom activities more confidently. Similarly, Shapiro et al. (2014) asserted that "learners who feel overly anxious about using the target language are less likely to progress in language learning

successfully" (p. 26). Hence, integrating music into the teaching lessons is essential to language development because through musical rhymes students can actively participate in classroom activities. As a result, they may process information more efficiently, collaborate in discussions, and seek comprehension of concepts as they are more involved in the learning task (Short et al., 2018). Similarly, they are more in contact with the language by reading, writing, listening, and speaking, thereby having more opportunities to acquire it (Levine and McCloskey, 2013 as cited in Short et al., 2018). Most importantly, phonological and phonemic awareness are more likely to be developed as students, while learning the lyrics, do many repetitions at the linguistic levels. All of this is very beneficial in terms of literacy development since understanding the rhyme and intonation of a language improves the reading skills to a great extent and pronunciation and fluency. In addition, the auditory sense is enhanced as listening is encouraged through constant repetition drills. Another significant point to highlight is how cognitive skills such as reciting, attention, memorizing, processing, body movement, listening, and speaking are encouraged through music in the teaching lessons (Kenney, 2005).

Because music provides many opportunities for language interaction in a classroom environment free of constraint, its benefits in the development of ELLs' speaking skills, particularly, are remarkable. On the one hand, as Jones (2007) stated, fluency depends on confidence, the vocabulary built previously, and pronunciation practice. Therefore, learners are more likely to speak if they have already reviewed the language functions and words and practiced their pronunciation. As they feel more relaxed, they are also more willing to communicate and take risks (Shapiro et al., 2014). On the other hand, prompting students to get engaged in music-related activities allows for communication to occur more easily since group and peer work are generally encouraged in this type of educational practice. According to

Herrera and Murry (2016), a collaborative learning environment helps diminish learners' level of anxiety, thus boosting their self-confidence and their motivation for second language acquisition.

Given the points mentioned above, the main aim of this thesis project is to explore new territories in the use of music by creating short rhymes related to the content developed in English language learning in secondary schools in Bogotá –Colombia. The idea is to create verses that address the most common language functions learners use in everyday situations to improve students' speaking skills subsequently. For the musical rhymes to be more easily taught and learned, I have given some recommendations and have uploaded interactive videos about the chanted verses on a *Youtube* channel, so teachers worldwide can benefit from this valuable learning tool.

This thesis project is just the beginning of a long and beautiful journey through musical rhymes, considered an agreeable art form and an essential part of human existence. I am just setting an example, so others can follow. Maybe together, we can transform and contribute to English language education in Colombia and around the world.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

According to (Shen 2009), "Songs have been an amusing companion for human beings for as long as or even longer than we can speak. As an integral part of our language experience, it can be of great value to foreign language teaching" (p. 88). Music is considered a valuable pedagogical tool since it motivates second language acquisition, provides cultural understanding, promotes recreation and relaxation, expands learners' vocabulary, teaches natural pronunciation, and helps create a successful and agreeable learning environment conducive to the development of students' language skills in general terms (Shen, 2009).

In this chapter, I will examine research pertaining to the integration of music in the classroom and its benefits in the development of learners' speaking skills. Firstly, I provide a definition of music, its importance in our life, and the educational setting. Secondly, I provide some tips and recommendations to incorporate music in the learning and teaching of a language and some music-related activities useful to develop speaking skills. Thirdly, I provide definitions of terms related to the development of speaking skills as well as the ones involved in the process of speaking. Then I will discuss how music can help promote the development of speaking skills particularly. Finally, I will discuss several studies supporting the idea that music is an effective pedagogical tool that motivates and stimulates oral communication skills.

Definition of Music

According to Hammond and Jackson (2015), music is an essential element in oral tradition that is used as an attention-getter and a powerful brain booster. Farmand et al. (2013) defined music as an inherent part of human culture and the universal language of human beings. Godt (2005) stated that "music is a defining characteristic of humankind: that is, music is a necessary condition for defining what we are" (p. 87). Hargreaves and North (1999) have added that "Music is an essential vehicle through which the cultural heritage is passed on from one generation to the next "(p. 75).

The Importance of Music in our Life

As stated by Hargreaves and North (1999), music is a vehicle for feelings, aesthetic enjoyment, entertaining, and communication. Music affects us socially, emotionally, and cognitively. That is, it has a great impact on the formation of self-identity, interpersonal relationships, and moods in everyday life. Songs can follow us everywhere we go as the new digital era has made them entirely mobile. As explained by Davis (2021), music plays an important part in our everyday life as it affects us in many different ways.

On the one hand, it is a way of expressing our feelings and emotions. It can help us reduce stress, combat frustration, and anxiety. Moreover, it is a natural dopamine reliever, which translates into intense feelings of happiness and joy. On the other hand, music affects society morally and culturally. Most importantly, it is everywhere. Not having music is like feeling empty (Davis, 2021).

Music in the Educational Setting

Studies have shown that music has always been considered an effective pedagogical tool in the learning and teaching of a language. According to Kenney (2005), songs help build a successful and agreeable learning environment that stimulates language skills and memory. Similarly, Ara (2009) found that music makes the classroom lively and brings enjoyment and excitement thereby motivating students to acquire a second language. Viewed this way, the learning and teaching of a language are more effective if accompanied by common cultural aids, such as stories, music, and repetition (Hammond & Jackson, 2015). Krashen (1982 as cited in Parrish, 2004) argued that teachers need to create a supportive and engaging classroom atmosphere by reducing learners' level of anxiety, thus making them more confident about using the language. This assumption correlates with the idea that students are more likely to actively participate in classroom activities if they are in an environment free of constraints (Shapiro et al., 2014). Hence, the soothing and ludic aspect of music in the classroom can be described as a motivational force and a valuable learning tool that fosters language development (Mashayekh and Hashemi, 2011). Farmand et al. (2013) correlated with the assumption that music increases learners' motivation for second language acquisition and decreases their level of anxiety, thereby stimulating language skills. Moreover, as learners are constantly writing, reading, listening, and speaking, when music is incorporated, they have more opportunities to acquire the language (Levine & McCloskey, 2013 as cited in Short et al., 2018). Likewise, Ulate (2008) explained that musical rhymes provide comprehensible input and create a more relaxing learning environment that facilitates language acquisition.

On the one hand, music increases brainpower. According to Hammond and Jackson (2015), "When we process new content with music and rhyme, the brain creates multiple neural

pathways in different parts of the brain that become permanently connected" (p. 161). Therefore, music is fundamental to process and remember new information (Kenney 2005). On the other hand, songs foster cognitive skills, such as movement, memory, repetition, recitation, speaking, and listening, which make part of the culturally responsive processing tools (Hammond & Jackson, 2015, p. 157). In addition, musical rhymes encourage group unity and stimulate creativity and self-expression (Cuesta, 2006). Vadivel et al. (2021) stated that music is essential to increase learners' self-esteem, promote leadership and teamwork. Additionally, Herrera and Murry (2016) asserted that promoting a collaborative learning environment increases the opportunities for language acquisition since peer and group work boost learners' confidence and encourage them to be more engaged in classroom activities.

Songs are also beneficial in terms of language skills. Kenney (2005) highlighted the importance of songs in the development of literacy skills and the building of vocabulary in meaningful contexts. When children recite songs, they follow the intonation, rhythm, and pattern of a language, thus improving their reading, listening, pronunciation, and speaking skills. (Kenney, 2005). Likewise, Purcell (1992) pointed out that songs help expand the vocabulary, enhance pronunciation, listening, reading, and writing, and provide cultural understanding. As songs provide rhythm and melody, learners are more likely to improve their listening skills without feeling bored in the process (Purcell, 1992). Similarly, Sevic (2012) stated that songs are one of the most effective pedagogical tools to improve learners' listening skills since music is an essential part of our life. In the same way, Schoepp (2001) explained that the repetitive and consistent nature of songs allowed learners to develop language fluency. Upon listening to a song, learners can produce utterances by following the same tune as the song (Schoepp, 2001).

Tips to Teach Songs in the Classroom

When teaching songs in the classroom is very important to take into consideration some recommendations. As suggested by Lems (2001), songs should be appropriate to learners' level of cognition. Besides, the content should be in accordance with learners' language proficiency, and the song lyrics should be clear and loud enough to prevent learners from submerging in the background music (Lems 2001). Griffee (1990 as cited in Lems, 2001) indicated that songs should be short and slow for beginners. Also, songs must be related to classroom activities, involve movement, and tell a story (Griffee, 1990 as cited in Lems, 2001). Lems (2001) also recommended that teachers review the song lyrics previously to avoid explicit and inappropriate language. Similarly, Sevic (2012) illustrated the importance of focusing on the target language and not the learner's singing skills. In addition, teachers need to link the songs with the class learning objectives (Sevic, 2012). Millington (2011) also agreed that the integration of music in the classroom should incorporate learning tasks to promote second language acquisition. Just singing will not stimulate language development. Instead, teachers need to take into consideration three fundamental stages of songs as a task (Millington, 2011).

Preparation stage.

Millington (2011) defined this stage as the one that helps active vocabulary. Using pictures and asking questions related to the song to practice sentence structure is beneficial (Millington, 2011). Moreover, as Hancock (2013) suggested, it is important that teachers encourage students to make predictions about songs by promoting picture discussion and key-word discussion. It is also crucial to play the first few seconds of the song, so learners can guess what it is about from the mood of the music (Hancock, 2013).

Core stage.

According to (Millington 2011), in this stage, students get entirely involved in the task by listening and singing the song several times individually or in chores. For the listening section, Hancock (2013) recommended encouraging learners to listen for details and gist in the first place. By selecting the picture that best matches the content of the song, identifying the type of discourse (dialogue, monologue, and narrative), the language function (tale-telling, complaining, daydreaming), and taking notes of key-words, learners can develop language skills. It is also fundamental that teachers encourage students to drill the lines of the song as a dialogue or ordinary speech without the musical instrumental (Hancock, 2013).

Follow-up activity.

In this stage, (Millington, 2011) highlighted the importance of prompting learners to practice the vocabulary and sentence structures from the song through role-plays and gap-filling activities. In addition, Hancock (2013) illustrated the importance of implementing activities that stimulate language development, such as

- Retell the song to a classmate as a personal anecdote.
- Add more information to the song.
- Role-play characters of the song.
- Ask learners to propose a different version of the song by replacing words.

Keskin (2011) also highlighted the importance of dramatizing the plot of the song, responding to questions related to the song, and encouraging students to express their feelings after listening.

Another significant point to highlight is that teachers can modify songs to meet the language objective learning. As Millington (2011) recommended, "with a little initiative and imagination, a children's song can easily be adapted. By slightly altering the vocabulary, grammar, or sentence structure whilst maintaining the original rhythm, a traditional song can be adapted to suit a particular theme or part of the curriculum" (p. 139). The music-related activities, as well as the recommendations proposed by Hancock (2013), Millington (2011), and Keskin (2011), are very beneficial in terms of the development of the speaking skill particularly.

Definition of Important Terms Related to the Development of Speaking Skills

The speaking skill.

Speaking is a "combinatorial language skill. It requires the ability to fulfill various communicative demands through efficient use of the spoken language" (Meng & Burns, 2012, p. 76). According to Torky (2006), speaking is defined " as the secondary stage students' ability to express themselves orally, coherently, fluently and appropriately in a given meaningful context to serve both transactional and interactional purposed using correct pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary and adopting the pragmatic and discourse rules of the spoken language. (p. 30). Speaking is "an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information" (Florez, 1999 as cited in Bailey, 2004, p. 2).

Fluency.

Meng and Burns (2012) defined fluency as "speech where the message is communicated coherently with few pauses and hesitations, thus causing minimal comprehension difficulties for the listener" (p. 43).

Accuracy.

"Speech where the message is communicated using correct grammar. The notion of speech can also be expanded to include correct pronunciation according to the target language" (Meng & Burns, 2012, p. 43).

Automaticity.

Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988 as cited in Schoepp, 2001) defined automaticity as "a component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses" (p. 2).

The listening skill.

According to Palmer (2014), "Listening is the primary way that students take information" (p. 10). Similarly, Newton and Nation (2020) defined listening as the way learners acquire the language and build up the necessary knowledge to use it.

The pronunciation skill.

As stated by Murphy (1991), "Pronunciation encompasses subsets of both speaking and listening development. (p. 52). As illustrated by Meng and Burns (2012), the pronunciation skills "are the ability to produce the segmental and suprasegmental features of the target language" (p. 59-60).

Segmental features.

As stated by Nunan (2003), vowels and consonants are considered the segmental features of a language.

Suprasegmental features.

According to Nunan (2003), stress, rhythm, and intonation are considered the suprasegmental phonemes of a language since they carry meaning differences.

Cognitive Processes Involved in Speaking

Conceptualization preparation.

Meng and Burns (2012) referred to conceptualization preparation as the learner's knowledge or background about the topic being discussed, which contributes to speech production.

Formulation.

As illustrated by Meng and Burns (2012), formulation refers to the grammatical structures and specific words and phrases the speaker uses to convey a message.

Articulation.

How the speaker expresses the message loudly by using the intonation, stress, and rhythm of the target language is known as articulation (Meng & Burns, 2012).

Self-monitoring.

As stated by Nunan and Carter (2001), self-monitoring "is concerned with language users being able to identify and self-correct mistakes" (p. 16).

Promoting Effective Oral Communication in the Classroom

As Murphy (1991) explained, listening, speaking, and pronunciation are central components for developing effective oral communication. Anuradha et al. (2014 as cited in Hussain, 2017) argued that "language is learned by speaking it first after a lot of listening to the sounds, words, phrases and sentences from the surroundings" (p. 14). Hence, listening and speaking are not only interrelated but also they are considered essentials skills in the improvement of oral speech. Palmer (2014) asserted that listening and speaking are the water that surrounds everything in our classes and upon which instruction depends" (p. 23). Similarly, Newton and Nation (2020) stated that "listening is the natural precursor to speaking; the early stages of language development in a person's first language (and in the naturalistic acquisition of other languages) are dependent on listening" (p. 52). Therefore, "through listening, learners can build an awareness of the interworkings of language systems at various levels and thus establish a base for more fluent productive skills" (Peterson, 2001 as cited in Mar 2020, p. 4). However, pronunciation also plays an essential role in developing speaking skills since communicating words and phrases clearly influences the articulation process of oral production (Newton & Nation, 2020).

As discussed throughout this study, songs provide ample opportunities for listening practice, sentence structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation drills (stress, rhythm, and intonation) which increases the opportunities to practice and acquire the language. According to Hussain

(2017), reciting rhymes, pronouncing, and reading aloud are effective technics to improve learners speaking skills. Slatery and Willis (2001) explained that repeating phrases prepare learners for oral communication because, through repetition, students can practice the intonation pattern of a language, get accustomed to saying the language sounds, understand the general meaning of the phrases or words they hear and gain confidence.

Another significant point to highlight, as explained by Torkey (2020), is that mastering speaking skills requires following grammatical rules, having a wide range of vocabulary, structuring discourse cohesively and coherently, and managing conversation skills. Hughes (2010) also argued that linguistic knowledge, phonemic awareness, and the pragmatic use of the language are essential to promote spoken language in the classroom. Building up all this knowledge is necessary for learners to begin to speak (Meng & Burns, 2012). Along with these lines, fluency, which is related to speaking, can be achieved if grammar and listening are practiced in the first place. Jones (2007) stated that fluency can be developed if learners know the grammar structure of the target language, the pronunciation of the words, and are confident about themselves.

Teachers need to use songs appropriately, and acknowledge the benefits that music brings into the classroom in order to stimulate learners' communicative skills. Oxford (1990 as cited in Ma & Oxford, 2014) pointed out that:

Learning strategies of a non-compensatory sort are also helpful for improving speaking. These include metacognitive strategies like planning and monitoring; a range of cognitive strategies that can enhance the vocabulary and grammar necessary for effective speaking; affective strategies to reduce anxiety; and social strategies to encourage interaction. (p. 3)

Cases Study and Music for the Development of Speaking Skills

There are significant benefits of implementing songs as a pedagogical tool to enhance learners' speaking skills. For instance, Romero et al. (2012) conducted a research action at Álvaro Gómez Hurtado, a public school in Bogotá, Colombia, to examine learners' oral production when participating in music-related activities. For the collection of the data, the authors observed English classes and applied a survey. The study revealed that songs were essential tools to encourage teamwork, increase learners' motivation and interest in second language acquisition as well as create a non-threatening classroom atmosphere conducive to developing learners' speaking skills. The results also showed that learners expanded their vocabulary and enhanced their pronunciation, thus becoming more confident when speaking (Romero et al., 2012).

Other evidence of how music enhances learners' speaking skills was shown in a study conducted by Almutairi and Shukri (2016) on analyzing the teachers' attitudes and beliefs on music as a pedagogical tool to stimulate learners' oral communication. Eighty-nine EFL teachers, who worked at an elementary school in the city of Jeddah, participated in the study. The researchers used a questionnaire for the data collection. The teachers were divided into four groups. The first group responded to questions related to their general perceptions and beliefs on the importance of songs in the teaching and learning of a language. The second group answered questions about the negative indicators of using songs in the classroom whereas the third group was asked about the positive indicators. The final group responded to questions related to the frequency of using songs in the English language program. The results indicated that the majority of teachers acknowledged the importance of incorporating songs in the curriculum since music provides a joyful atmosphere that helps learners develop language skills in many language

areas, such as listening, speaking, and pronunciation. Besides, music accelerates the memorization of vocabulary due to the repetitive and consistent nature of songs.

The results also revealed that the EFL teachers found it challenging to find the appropriate songs for the classroom and that some songs are culturally inappropriate according to the Saudi teachers' beliefs. In addition, even though teachers reported that schools are not well equipped, the English instructors still considered music as an essential tool for learners to practice English more easily. Based on the evidence, Almutairi and Shukri (2016) recommended using qualitative interviews and observations to elicit more responses from other teachers, developing a website that contains music related to the Saudi culture, and conducting more studies to explore new methodologies on presenting songs in the classroom.

More evidence on the use of songs to improve speaking skills was illustrated in the study carried out by Wijaya (2018) in Aisyiyah Health Sciences College of Yogyakarta in the academic year 2013-2014. The study compared the progress in the speaking skill of two groups: Nursing English class 4. B2, which had 21 students (the experimental group), and physiotherapy English class 4. A1, which had 20 students (the control group). Both groups had eight encounters. For the data collection, the researcher used a pre-test, performance treatment, and a post-test. The experimental group interacted in a music-based learning atmosphere. In contrast, the control group interacted in a traditional classroom environment. The research findings revealed that students who participated in music-related activities showed significant speaking development compared with students taught under conventional methodologies. The researcher concluded that teaching English through songs was highly effective as students were more likely to remember words and phrases due to the repetitive pattern of songs. Similar results were found in a study conducted by Wahyuni et al. (2018) with second-semester students of the English

department at STKIP Bina Bangsa Getsempena Banda Aceh. Thirty-five students participated in the experimental research. The purpose of the research was to improve learners' speaking skills through the use of music in the classroom. The researcher considered that boosting students' confidence and providing them with vocabulary was fundamental to promote oral communication. For the data collection, the researcher applied a pre-test to measure students' language proficiency and a post-test to see learners' progress after interacting with songs. Wahyuni et al. (2018) concluded that songs did help students enhance their oral production as they felt more confident about themselves.

As mentioned throughout this chapter, music is a powerful pedagogical tool that facilitates second language acquisition and stimulates oral communication skills. Firstly, songs help create an agreeable and supportive learning environment that allows learners to participate in classroom activities more confidently. Secondly, music provides learners with the necessary tools to begin to speak. Through music, students practice vocabulary, language functions, and pronunciation, which are fundamental in the development of speaking skills. Thirdly, music improves cognitive and social skills. In addition, it increases learners' interest and motivation toward second language acquisition.

Ultimately, music can become a valuable learning tool if used appropriately in the classroom. To do so, it is important to integrate music into a specific learning task, encourage high order thinking skills such as inferring and predicting, promote collaboration among learners, listen for details and gist, practice the song lyrics as if learners were rehearsing a dialogue, and most importantly, provide follow -up activities such as role-playing, replacing, adding more information, retelling, proposing a new version of the song, etc. doing so will prompt students to speak.

Chapter Three: Project Design

In this chapter, I explain the rationale of creating musical rhymes for secondary school students in Bogotá, Colombia as a way to stimulate the development of ELLs' speaking skills thereby contributing to the improvement of English language education in Colombia and around the world. As a non-native English speaker, I know how difficult it is to foster communication skills in a classroom environment where English is taught as a foreign language and where there are limited opportunities for language use due to the multiple variables, factors and circumstances that affect the quality of English teaching and learning. According to Getie (2020), lack of motivation and interest towards second language acquisition, ineffective instructional approaches, lack of home language support, anxiety, social and affective factors, and a threatening learning environment are among the most common factors hindering the quality of English language education. Abad (2012) also pointed out that teachers' linguistic ego and attitudes toward English teaching play a fundamental role in language learning. In addition, Le Gal (2018) argued that using imported materials that are not in line with learners' linguistic needs may negatively impact the learning and teaching process. Thus, it is essential that educators design teaching materials according to the learners' context and needs (Le Gal, 2018).

Evidently, we educators must search for ways to serve students the best way possible by incorporating the most prevailing approaches and methods in language teaching. In this sense, designing a learning aid that promotes language interaction and stimulates the development of learners' speaking skills is pivotal in today's educational settings. As stated by Koran (2015),

speaking is one the most important ability for learners and the most neglected one in language instruction. On the one hand, English is considered the first global lingua franca. Therefore, having a command of the spoken language is crucial to open many doors in business, education, politics, entertainment, social life, among others.

However, despite the predominant role that the English language has in this fast-evolving world, studies have shown that most public high schools place much emphasis on the development of writing and grammar skills which limits the possibilities for learners to communicate effectively in and out of the classroom. For these reasons, it is fundamental to explore new territories in language teaching in order to improve the quality of EFL instruction in Colombia and around the world by offering an alternative to traditional learning classrooms. Doing so will boost learning engagement and students' performance.

Nursery rhymes, for instance, have proven to be an effective pedagogical tool in the development of language skills in early childhood education. Many children across the globe had their first experience with words while reciting rhymes. They also developed literacy and cognitive skills, improved vocabulary, and gained knowledge about the world while socializing and having fun in the process. Therefore, by incorporating music-related activities in the classroom, we teachers may promote language interaction in an engaging and successful learning environment that motivates second language acquisition and fosters communication skills. According to Christiamia (2014), through music, learners build up the necessary knowledge they need to begin to speak. Integrating songs in the teaching process improves listening, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and memory. Moreover, music provides cultural understanding and a supportive learning environment that encourages learners to speak more confidently (Christamia, 2014).

Therefore, I will create some musical rhymes related to the content developed in English language learning in secondary schools in Bogotá. I will focus not on a specific grade but all secondary high school. By doing so, I will have more range to cover in terms of content material. However, the idea is not to create hundreds of rhymes but to address the most common language functions students use in everyday conversations. The rhymes will be recorded and uploaded on a *Youtube* channel so teachers from Colombia or even from around the world can use them for pedagogical purposes, mainly to improve students' speaking skills.

In reality, this project will significantly impact English language education as it will motivate teachers to creatively incorporate an element that has been and will always be essential in our lives and the educational setting. Additionally, it will stimulate second language acquisition. And finally, it will be an example for others to follow. Maybe, in the near future, there will be hundreds of teachers making and sharing their musical rhymes, thus creating a global learning community that helps transform education positively.

Chapter Four: The Project

The present project is the creation of ten musical rhymes that address the most common language functions learners from secondary schools in Bogotá, Colombia, use in everyday conversations. This project is mainly designed to support teachers from Bogota- Colombia and provide them with a learning aid that helps stimulate oral communication skills in the classroom thereby contributing to the improvement of EFL instruction. The idea is to use the content of the songs to encourage learners to speak. Once they have learned the song lyrics, they will have the necessary tools to communicate more easily and confidently. These chanted verses address language functions, such as personal information, daily routines, free time activities, jobs and professions, likes and dislikes, plans in the future, past events, life experiences, present perfect continuous, and hypothetical situations. Most of the musical rhymes start with an introductory phrase that predicts the song content and encourages conversations. Also, the songs encourage repetition, and most of them have a karaoke room, so learners can recite the lyrics. In addition, some of the songs contain colloquial phrases commonly used in music and real communicative contexts such as wanna, cause, bro, 'em, and homies. The learning of this type of vocabulary refers to the descriptive approach to teaching. According to DeCapua (2017), learners must become aware that prescriptive grammar rules may vary from one context to another and that there are forms of the language that are more acceptable than others. By understanding how language works in real contexts, EFL/ESL teachers can help learners in the learning process (DeCapua, 2017). However, every phrase in the song is accompanied by an image that facilitates

the comprehensibility of the vocabulary being addressed. Short et al. (2018) stated that “visual aids, video, and audio support helps, to a great extent, comprehensibility of the material being worked” (p. 75).

It is important to remember that the songs have not been created to develop singing skills but to help learners improve their speaking skills. To do so, teachers should take into consideration some recommendations provided by Hancock (2013), Millington (2011), and Keskin (2011). The tips are as follow

- Integrating the song into a specific learning task
- Cultivating high-order thinking skills such as predicting and inferring.
- Encouraging collaboration among learners.
- Listening for details and gists.
- Drill the lines of the song as if learners were speaking.
- Doing follow-up activities such as role-playing, retelling, adding more information.
- Replacing, responding to questions related to the song, among others.

The songs have been uploaded on my *Youtube* channel (Figure 4.1) that can be found at the link to my *Youtube* channel.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7J0uj1oc32C_e7oz77GK3Q

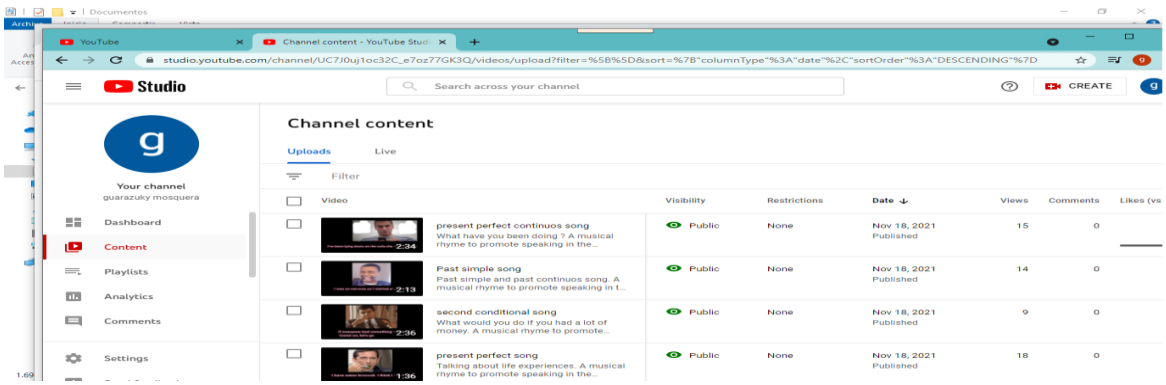


Figure 4.1: ***Youtube*** **channel**

Musical Rhymes

The name of the first song is “Personal Information.” Once students have learned the song lyrics, teachers may stimulate oral communication skills by encouraging students to replace and add more information to the song. They can also role-play conversations responding to questions such as what is your name? How do people call you? How old are you? Who do you live with? Where do you live? And what sports do you like? It is important that the teacher clarify the use of the word "bro" and "homies"

Here’s the link to the song: https://youtu.be/c1QspozYoak

These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.2).

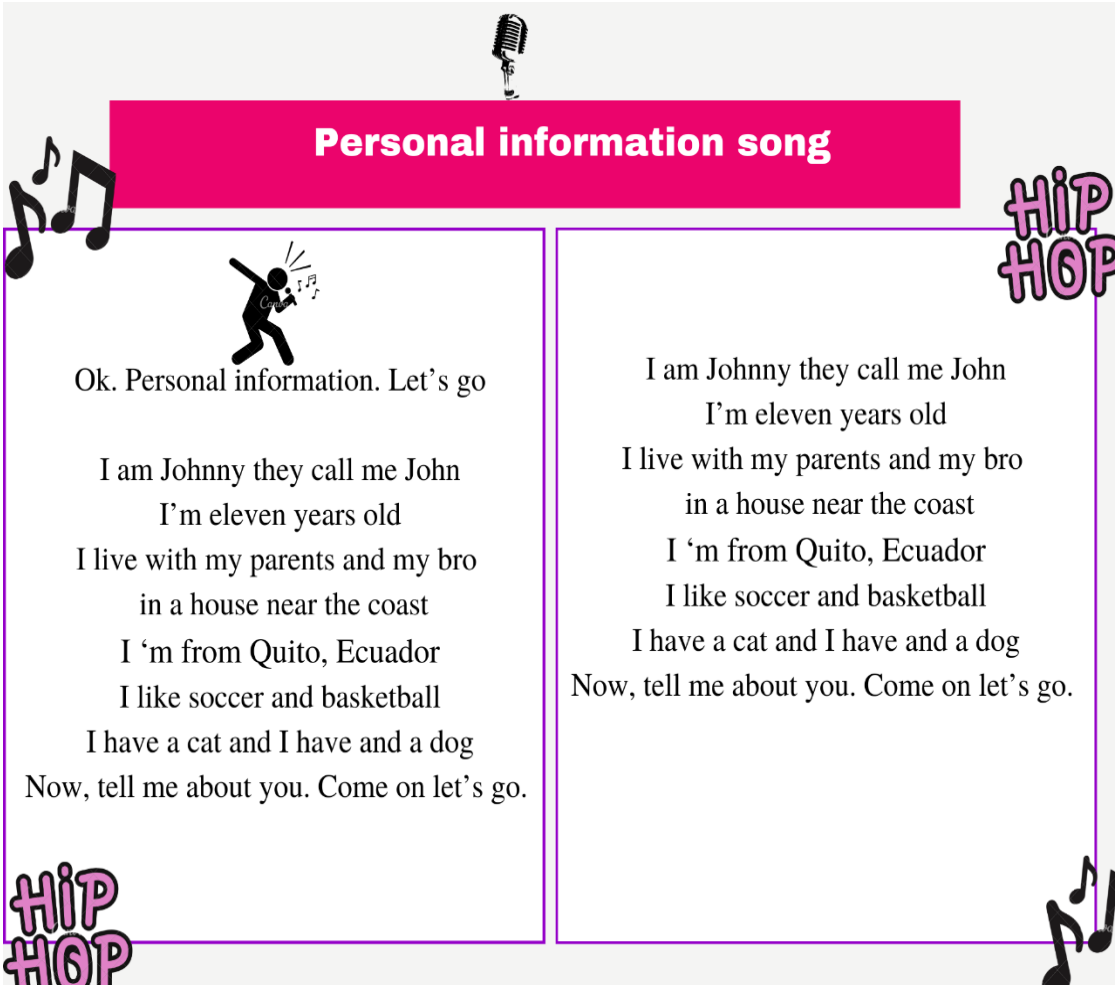

Personal information song
HIP HOP
Ok. Personal information. Let’s go
I am Johnny they call me John
I’m eleven years old
I live with my parents and my bro
in a house near the coast
I ‘m from Quito, Ecuador
I like soccer and basketball
I have a cat and I have and a dog
Now, tell me about you. Come on let’s go.
I am Johnny they call me John
I’m eleven years old
I live with my parents and my bro
in a house near the coast
I ‘m from Quito, Ecuador
I like soccer and basketball
I have a cat and I have and a dog
Now, tell me about you. Come on let’s go.
HIP HOP

Figure 4.2: Personal information song

The name of the second song is “Daily Routines.” It is about students’ everyday life and how they feel at school. Once students have learned the song lyrics, teachers may encourage them to replace words, add more information and retell their everyday life to a classmate. Some questions can be asked to guide learners’ participation.

Here’s the link to the song: https://youtu.be/eKUFMgRL9Mg

These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.3)

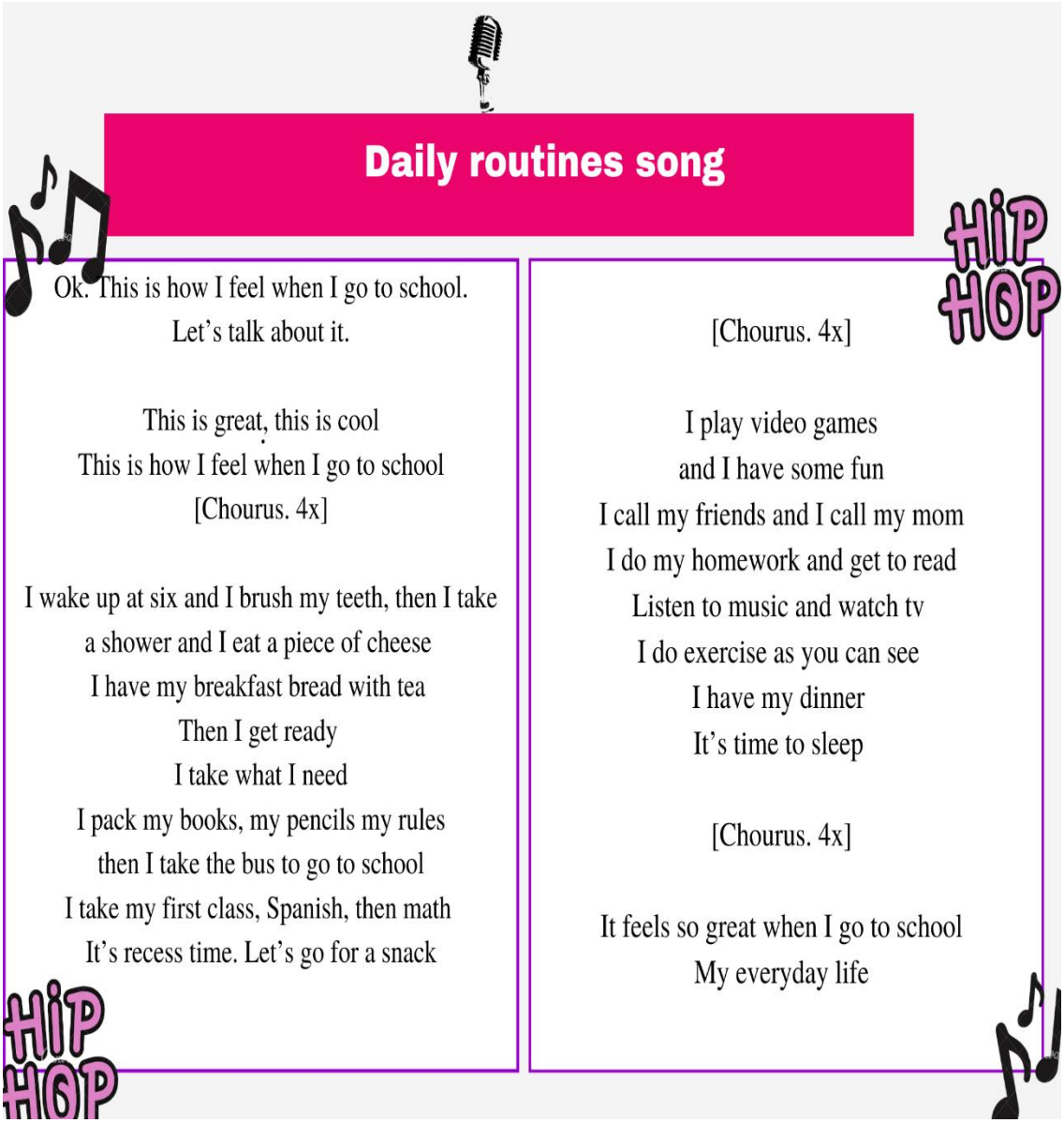

Daily routines song
Ok. This is how I feel when I go to school.
Let’s talk about it.
This is great, this is cool
This is how I feel when I go to school
[Chourus. 4x]
I wake up at six and I brush my teeth, then I take
a shower and I eat a piece of cheese
I have my breakfast bread with tea
Then I get ready
I take what I need
I pack my books, my pencils my rules
then I take the bus to go to school
I take my first class, Spanish, then math
It’s recess time. Let’s go for a snack
[Chourus. 4x]
I play video games
and I have some fun
I call my friends and I call my mom
I do my homework and get to read
Listen to music and watch tv
I do exercise as you can see
I have my dinner
It’s time to sleep
[Chourus. 4x]
It feels so great when I go to school
My everyday life
HIP HOP
HIP HOP

Figure 4.3: Daily routines

The name of the Third song is “Jobs and professions.” In this song, I have made special emphasis on what a person would like to be in the future and the reason why they chose that job or profession. Once students have learned the song lyrics, teachers may encourage them to respond to the question: What do wanna be when you grow up and why? Learners may use the vocabulary in the song, replace or add more information. It is important that teachers clarify the use of “wanna.”

Here’s the link to the song: https://youtu.be/uJeH1SebCwg

These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.4).

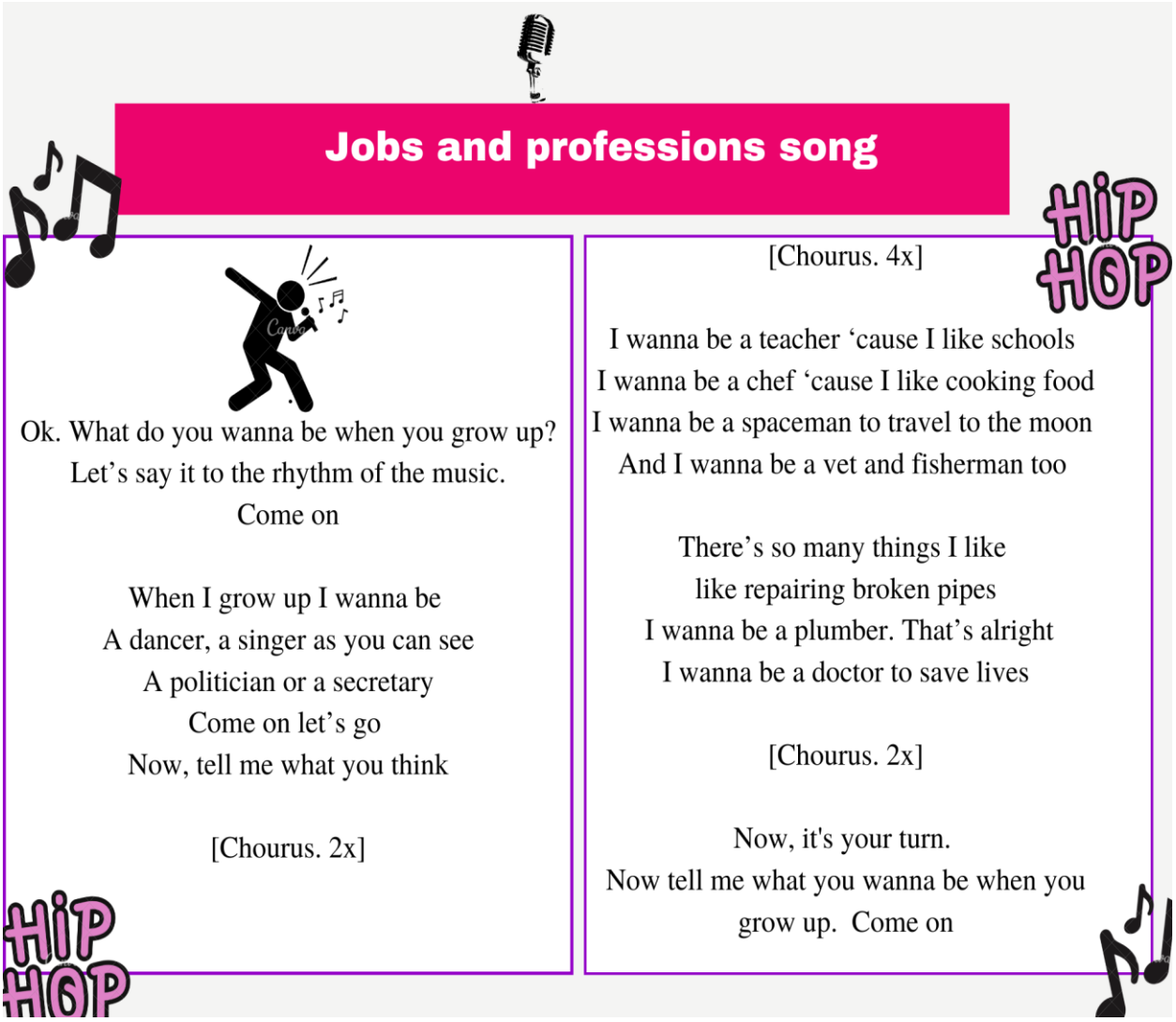

Jobs and professions song
HIP HOP
Ok. What do you wanna be when you grow up?
Let’s say it to the rhythm of the music.
Come on
When I grow up I wanna be
A dancer, a singer as you can see
A politician or a secretary
Come on let’s go
Now, tell me what you think
[Chourus. 2x]
HIP HOP
[Chourus. 4x]
I wanna be a teacher ‘cause I like schools
I wanna be a chef ‘cause I like cooking food
I wanna be a spaceman to travel to the moon
And I wanna be a vet and fisherman too
There’s so many things I like
like repairing broken pipes
I wanna be a plumber. That’s alright
I wanna be a doctor to save lives
[Chourus. 2x]
Now, it's your turn.
Now tell me what you wanna be when you
grow up. Come on

Figure 4.4: Jobs and professions song

The name of the fourth song is “Free Time Activities.” It is about what a person does in their free time. In this song, much repetition is encouraged since learners must repeat what the singer says. Once students have learned the song lyrics, teachers may encourage them to respond to the question: What do you like to do in your free time.? Learners may use the vocabulary in the song, replace, or add more information. It is important to encourage collaboration among students.

Here’s the link to the song: https://youtu.be/haPLLl1UOys

These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.5).

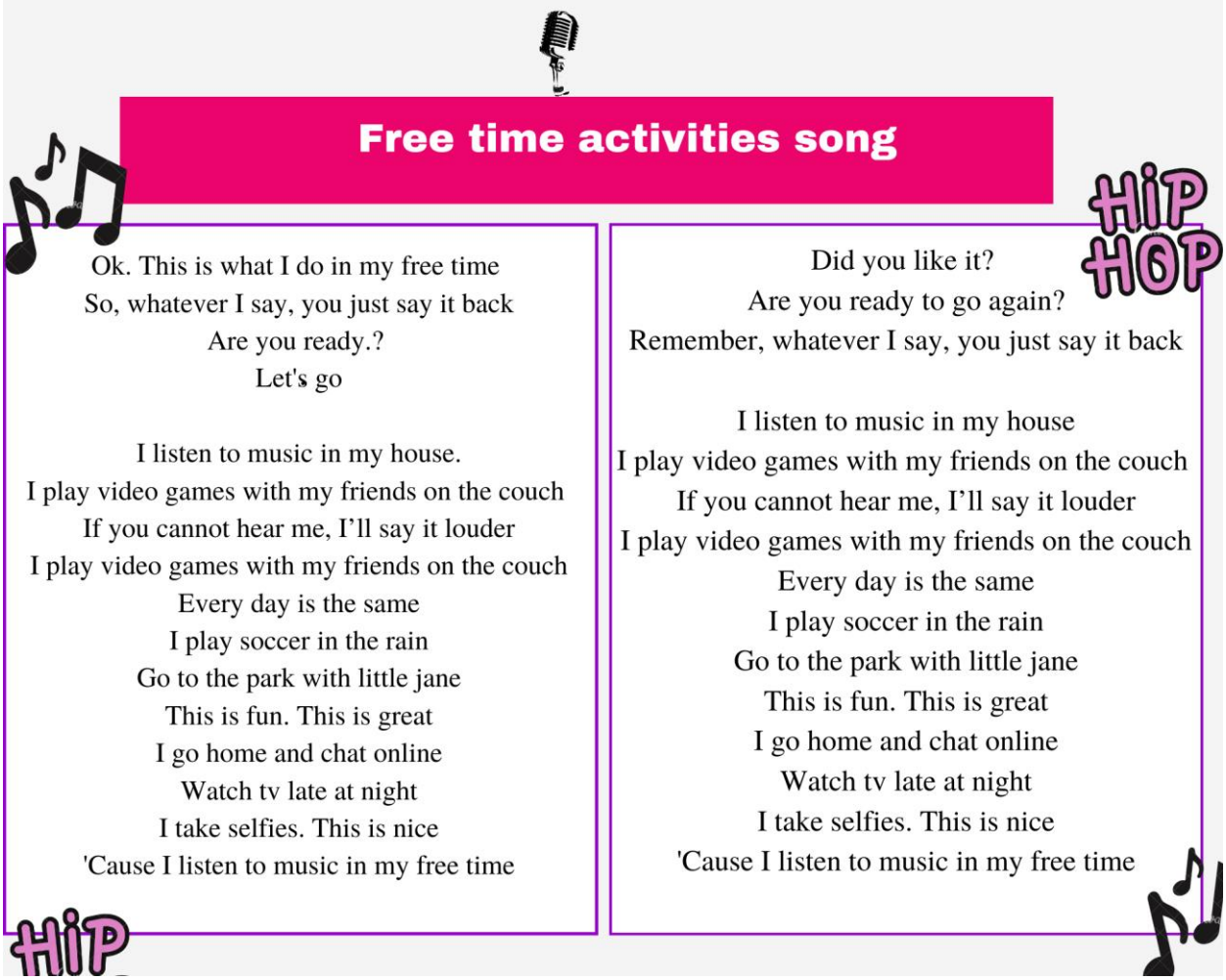

Free time activities song
Ok. This is what I do in my free time
So, whatever I say, you just say it back
Are you ready.?
Let's go
I listen to music in my house.
I play video games with my friends on the couch
If you cannot hear me, I'll say it louder
I play video games with my friends on the couch
Every day is the same
I play soccer in the rain
Go to the park with little jane
This is fun. This is great
I go home and chat online
Watch tv late at night
I take selfies. This is nice
'Cause I listen to music in my free time
Did you like it?
Are you ready to go again?
Remember, whatever I say, you just say it back
I listen to music in my house
I play video games with my friends on the couch
If you cannot hear me, I'll say it louder
I play video games with my friends on the couch
Every day is the same
I play soccer in the rain
Go to the park with little jane
This is fun. This is great
I go home and chat online
Watch tv late at night
I take selfies. This is nice
'Cause I listen to music in my free time
HIP HOP
HIP

Figure 4.5: Free time activities song

The name of the fifth song is “Likes and Dislikes.” In this song, I have made special emphasis on what food a person may like or dislike. Once students have learned the song lyrics, teachers may encourage them to respond to the question: what food do you like and don’t like? Learners may use the vocabulary of the song, replace, or add more information. As a complementary activity, teachers may also ask students about other word categories, such as sports, type of music, movies, among others. Educators may also explain related language functions, such as hate, can’t stand, dislike, enjoy, etc.

Here’s the link to the song: https://youtu.be/eugovhOAVeY

These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.6).

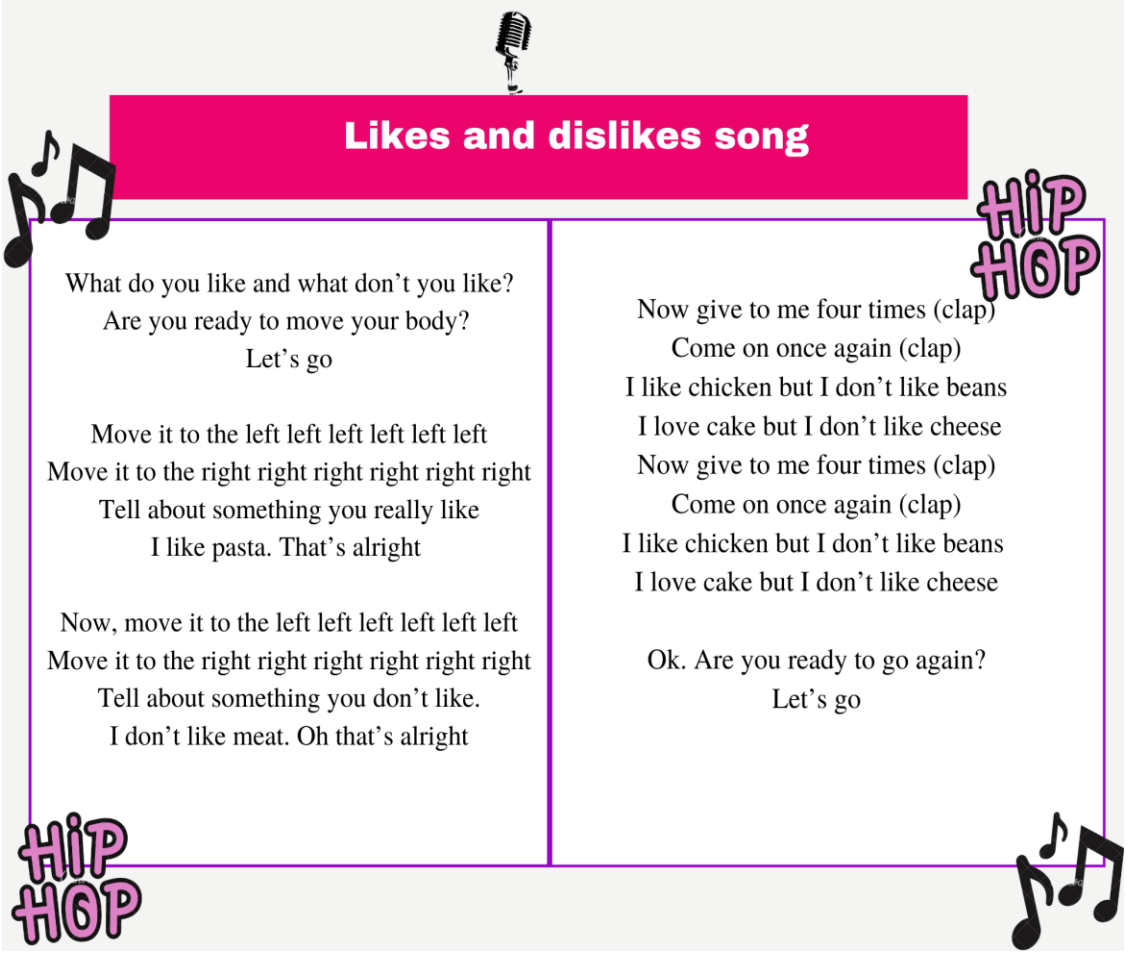

Likes and dislikes song
HIP HOP
What do you like and what don’t you like?
Are you ready to move your body?
Let’s go
Move it to the left left left left left left
Move it to the right right right right right right
Tell about something you really like
I like pasta. That’s alright
Now, move it to the left left left left left left
Move it to the right right right right right right
Tell about something you don’t like.
I don’t like meat. Oh that’s alright
Now give to me four times (clap)
Come on once again (clap)
I like chicken but I don’t like beans
I love cake but I don’t like cheese
Now give to me four times (clap)
Come on once again (clap)
I like chicken but I don’t like beans
I love cake but I don’t like cheese
Ok. Are you ready to go again?
Let’s go
HIP HOP

Figure 4.6: Likes and dislikes song

The name of the sixth song is “I’m going to.” It is about plans and intentions in the near future. In this song, special emphasis has been made on places, and the activities people usually do in those places. To encourage oral communication, teachers may ask: where are you going and what are you going to do.? To respond, Learners may use the vocabulary of the song, replace, or add more information. To do so, educators may provide learners with more vocabulary to maximize speaking opportunities. It is also essential that teachers clarify the words “‘em “and “homies.”

Here’s the link to the song: https://youtu.be/JZh4_lURuKI

These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.7).

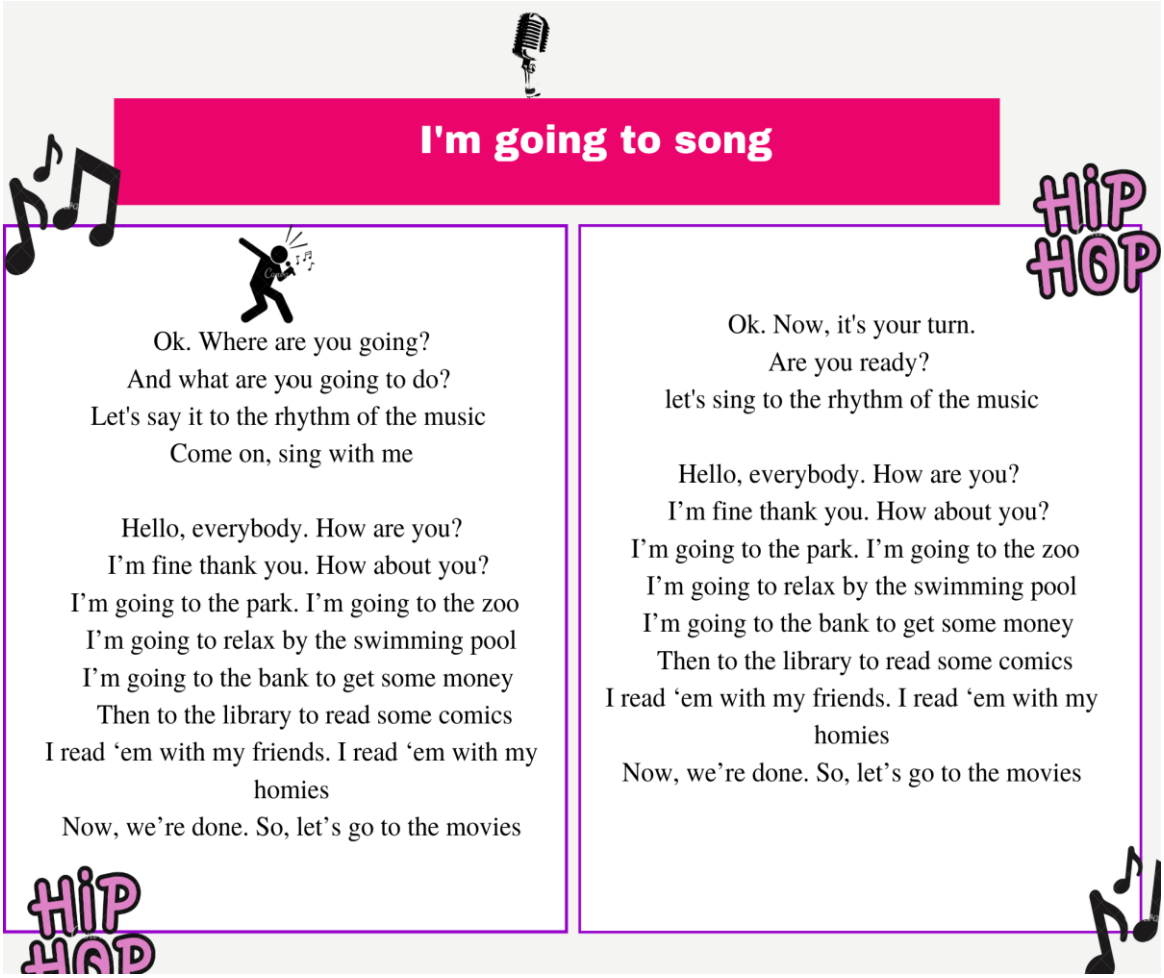

I'm going to song
HIP HOP
Ok. Where are you going?
And what are you going to do?
Let's say it to the rhythm of the music
Come on, sing with me
Hello, everybody. How are you?
I’m fine thank you. How about you?
I’m going to the park. I’m going to the zoo
I’m going to relax by the swimming pool
I’m going to the bank to get some money
Then to the library to read some comics
I read ‘em with my friends. I read ‘em with my homies
Now, we’re done. So, let’s go to the movies
Ok. Now, it's your turn.
Are you ready?
let's sing to the rhythm of the music
Hello, everybody. How are you?
I’m fine thank you. How about you?
I’m going to the park. I’m going to the zoo
I’m going to relax by the swimming pool
I’m going to the bank to get some money
Then to the library to read some comics
I read ‘em with my friends. I read ‘em with my homies
Now, we’re done. So, let’s go to the movies
HIP HOP

Figure 4.7: I’m going to song

The name of the seventh song is “Simple Past.” In this song, the simple past and the past continuous tense are used to describe an experience that happened to a person on vacation time. To encourage oral communication, teachers may prompt students to retell the experience as a personal anecdote. Some questions can be asked to guide students’ participation. For instance, where did you spend your vacation? How was the trip? Why? How did you feel? What were people doing? And what happened then? Learners may add more information, change the ending, or propose another version of the vacation time experience.

Here’s the link to the song: https://youtu.be/uZnSL08B6iE

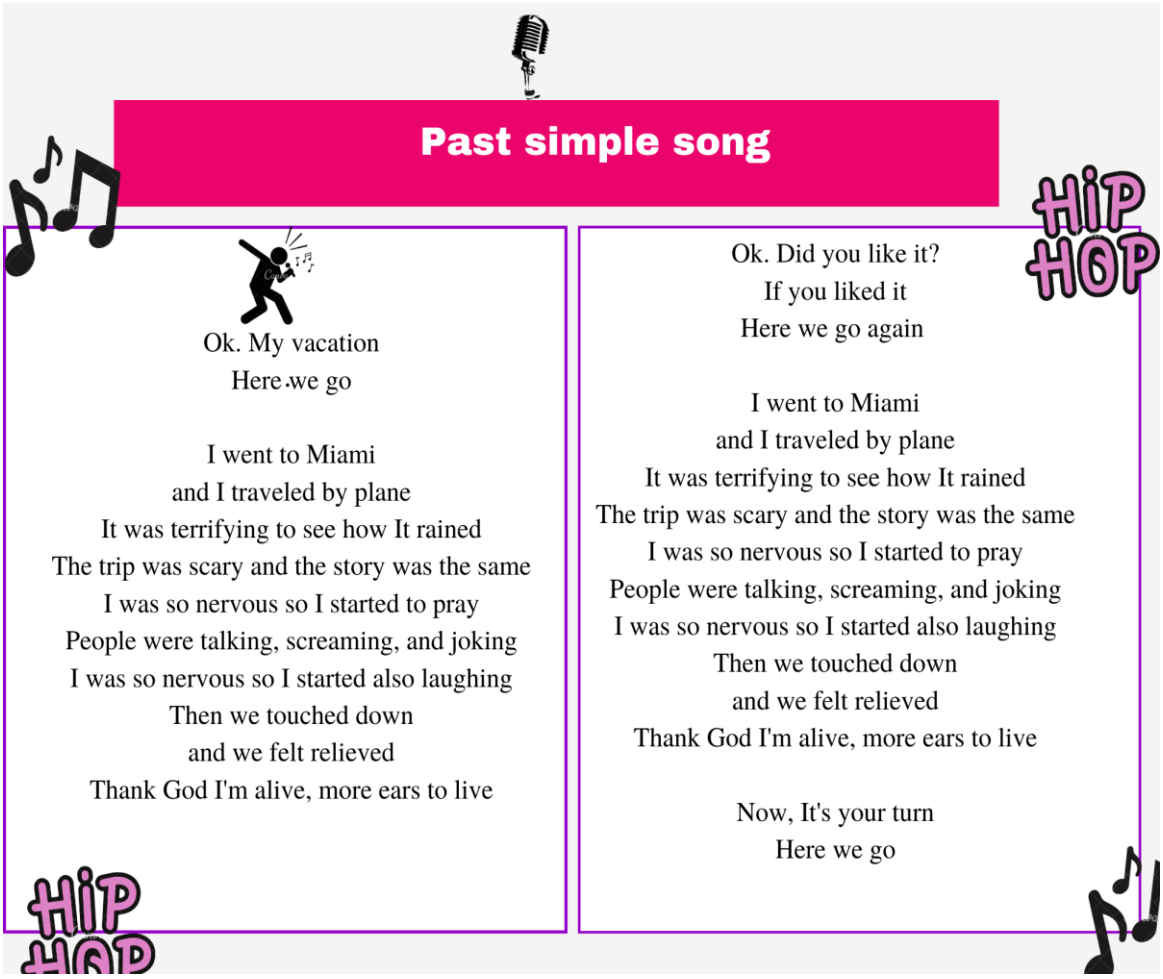
These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.8).

Past simple song
HIP HOP
Ok. My vacation
Here we go
I went to Miami
and I traveled by plane
It was terrifying to see how It rained
The trip was scary and the story was the same
I was so nervous so I started to pray
People were talking, screaming, and joking
I was so nervous so I started also laughing
Then we touched down
and we felt relieved
Thank God I'm alive, more ears to live
Ok. Did you like it?
If you liked it
Here we go again
I went to Miami
and I traveled by plane
It was terrifying to see how It rained
The trip was scary and the story was the same
I was so nervous so I started to pray
People were talking, screaming, and joking
I was so nervous so I started also laughing
Then we touched down
and we felt relieved
Thank God I'm alive, more ears to live
Now, It's your turn
Here we go
HIP HOP

Figure 4.8: Past simple song

The name of the eighth song is “Present Perfect.” In this song, I have asked questions about people’s life experiences. A special emphasis is placed on the phrase “have you ever?” To promote oral communication, teachers may encourage peer or group discussion on the questions addressed in the song. Educators may also ask follow-up questions to encourage students to speak more.

Here’s the link of the song: https://youtu.be/0IR33sCpEzQ

These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.9).

Present perfect song
HIP HOP
Have you ever loved somebody?
Have you ever been abroad?
Have you ever gotten lost in the middle of the road?
Have you ever eaten something so disgusting? I don’t know
Have you ever felt embarrassed?
Have you ever lost control?
Bis
I‘ve never loved somebody
I’ve never been abroad
But I’ve gotten lost in the middle of the road.
People have made fun of me
I think I’ve lost control
I have eaten broccoli.
I think I liked it so
Bis
These are life experiences.
Have you ever....?
I just wanna know something about you.
Have you ever gotten a tattoo?
Have you ever visited a zoo?
Have you ever cooked some delicious food?
Or have you ever skipped classes in the high school?
If you have, just let me know.
If you haven't, Just let me know too
HIP HOP

Figure 4.9: Present perfect song

The name of the ninth song is “Present Perfect Continuous.” In the song, I have made special emphasis on a sedentary lifestyle and the activities related to it. To promote oral communication, teachers may ask students about what they have been doing recently and how they relate to the song. Students may use the vocabulary of the song or add more information. It is important to encourage peer and group discussion. Also, it is fundamental that teachers clarify the meaning of the phrases “real couch potato” and real “fitness freak” if necessary.

Here’s the link to the song: https://youtu.be/_v1ZRxJyzpk

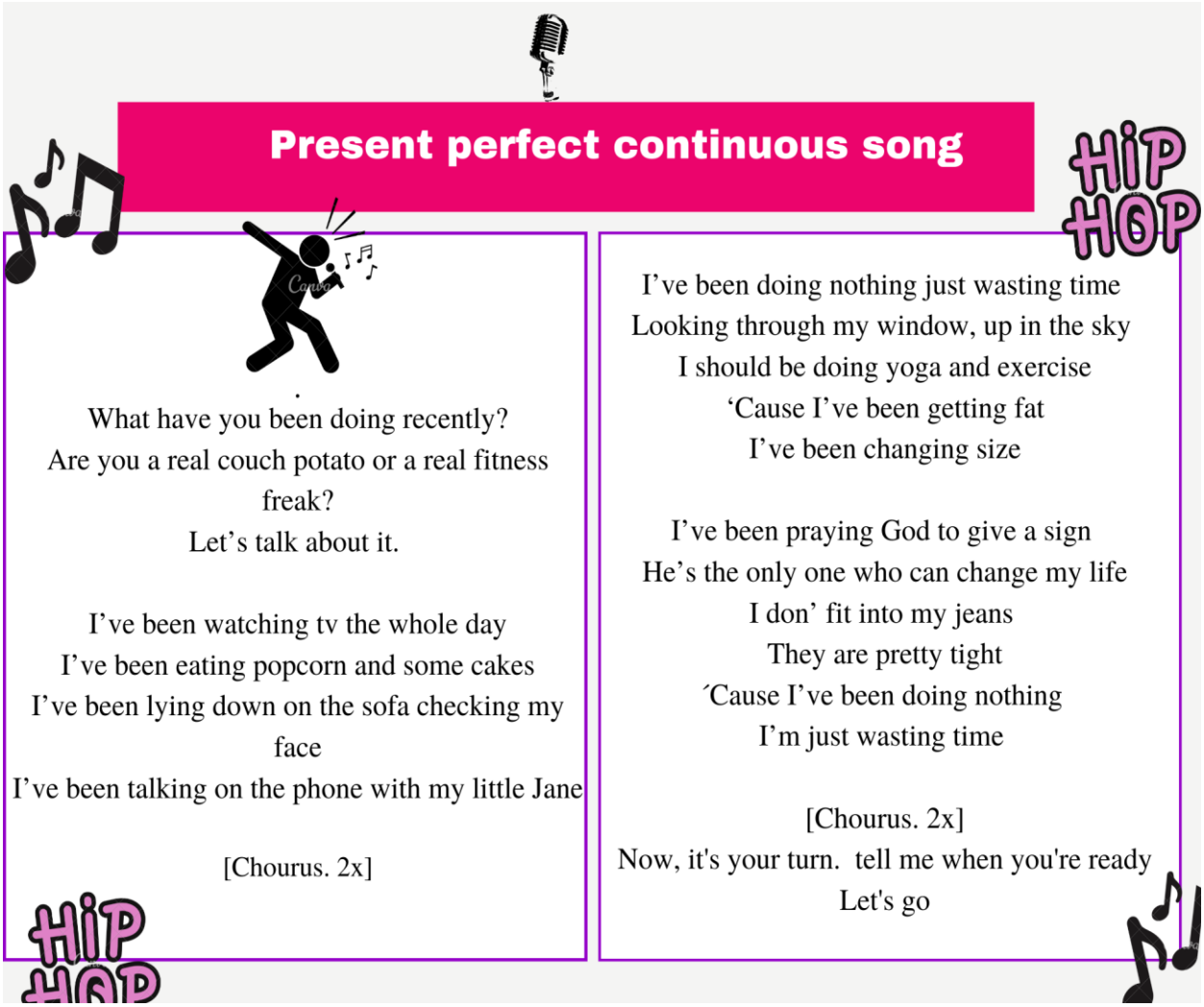
These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.10).

Present perfect continuous song
HIP HOP
What have you been doing recently?
Are you a real couch potato or a real fitness freak?
Let’s talk about it.
I’ve been watching tv the whole day
I’ve been eating popcorn and some cakes
I’ve been lying down on the sofa checking my face
I’ve been talking on the phone with my little Jane
[Chourus. 2x]
I’ve been doing nothing just wasting time
Looking through my window, up in the sky
I should be doing yoga and exercise
‘Cause I’ve been getting fat
I’ve been changing size
I’ve been praying God to give a sign
He’s the only one who can change my life
I don’ fit into my jeans
They are pretty tight
´Cause I’ve been doing nothing
I’m just wasting time
[Chourus. 2x]
Now, it's your turn. tell me when you're ready
Let's go
HIP HOP

Figure 4.10: Present perfect continuous song

The name of the tenth song is “Second Conditional.” In the song, I have made special emphasis on the things a particular person would do if they had much money. To promote oral communication, teachers may encourage students to answer the question: what would you do if you had a lot of money? Teachers may also ask students if they relate to the things addressed in the song.

Here’s the link to the song: https://youtu.be/gofUqxxMaNU

These are the song lyrics (Figure 4.11).

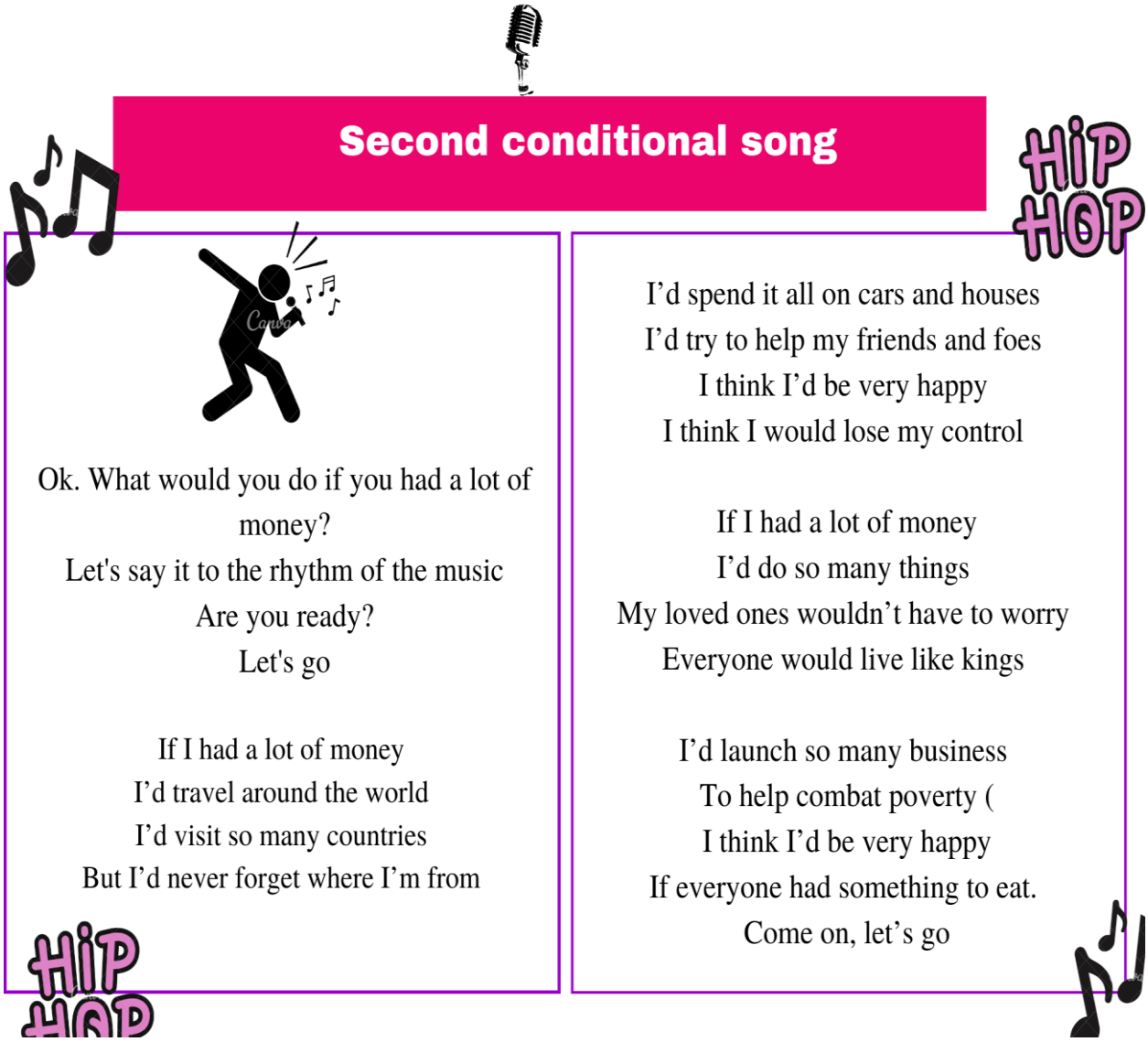

Second conditional song
HIP HOP
Ok. What would you do if you had a lot of money?
Let's say it to the rhythm of the music
Are you ready?
Let's go
If I had a lot of money
I’d travel around the world
I’d visit so many countries
But I’d never forget where I’m from
I’d spend it all on cars and houses
I’d try to help my friends and foes
I think I’d be very happy
I think I would lose my control
If I had a lot of money
I’d do so many things
My loved ones wouldn’t have to worry
Everyone would live like kings
I’d launch so many business
To help combat poverty (
I think I’d be very happy
If everyone had something to eat.
Come on, let’s go
HIP HOP

Figure 4.11: Second conditional song

To conclude, it is important to point out that the lyrics have been created to promote oral communication skills in the classroom. To do so, it is crucial to follow the recommendations mentioned above and to prompt students to learn the song lyrics. By doing so, learners will have the necessary tools to begin to speak since they will learn the basic grammar structures, the vocabulary, and the pronunciation of the words.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

The quality of English teaching and learning can be hindered by numberless factors ranging from external to internal ones. Many are related to inadequate lesson preparation and curriculum design, teacher's professional training, learning environment in the classroom, teaching philosophy, lack of students' motivation and parents' involvement in the instructional process, students' socioeconomic and family background, the role of school, local community as well as the educational policies, among others. For many years, studies have been conducted to address this English language educational phenomenon. In this respect, acquiring new knowledge and skill and accessing the recent pedagogical trends is a necessity. As educators, we must explore new territories and use the most prevailing language teaching methodologies that help address students' learning challenges more effectively.

In this sense, creating rhymes to improve students' speaking skills was not only a pedagogical challenge but also an alternative to traditional classroom environments that may contribute to the improvement of English language education in Colombia and around the world. This project was also a beautiful and enriching journey that helped me validate and expand my understanding of the use of songs as a learning aid. As an English learner, I used to listen to music and use the vocabulary of the songs to create poems and rhymes out of them. From that, I can say that music greatly benefited my writing, listening, reading, and speaking skills. In fact, songs have been considered a valuable pedagogical tool that facilitates second language acquisition and stimulates language skills in a pleasing and supportive classroom atmosphere.

Moreover, music can help promote oral commutation skills since it provides learners with the necessary tools to begin to speak. When music is integrated appropriately in the classroom, students gain vocabulary and confidence, practice language functions and pronunciation patterns, develop cognitive and social skills, and acquire the language while interacting with it.

I hope this project benefits English language education in Colombia and around the world and encourages teachers to creatively use music in the classroom to stimulate language skills. It is my hope that teachers across the globe will take into consideration the recommendations given in this project to promote and strengthen oral communication skills through the content of the musical rhymes. Moreover, I have great expectations that this project will inspire other teachers to create more chanted verses that help optimize learning opportunities, thereby improving students' language proficiency and, subsequently, EFL/ESL instruction.

As the songs were created on a hip-hop beat rhythm, it would be great to explore other music genres to have a large repertoire of musical rhymes to choose from. Doing so will offer different and appealing chanted verses for teachers and students. In addition, covering more topics and language functions through musical rhymes is also an educational issue that should be addressed in further research. Finding the appropriate song to teach a language function is sometimes challenging. Hence, if teachers had access to a great variety of musical rhymes, they would have more opportunities to promote oral commutation in different learning contexts.

Ultimately, none of the musical rhymes will have a great impact on English language education if they are not shared in the first place. We will be surprised to know that there are hundreds of teachers worldwide with innovative teaching aids that are still unknown. In this respect, creating and strengthening online learning and teaching communities should continue to be a priority if we desire to transform education for the better.

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